Castiel stepped back from the archangel, but that was the only indication of his fear that he showed.

"You've been hiding the Winchesters," said Uriel, and this was it, unless Castiel could show the archangel his point of view, or find a way to escape, then he was finished.

It would do no good to deny it, Castiel thought.

"Yes."

"I have orders to return you to Heaven," Uriel says, and Castiel nods. He expected that much. "Will you go quietly?"

Castiel doesn't answer for a long moment, then lifts his chin, meeting Uriel's eyes.

"The humans are not wrong," Castiel says. "I cannot follow Heaven's plan for their species."

"Will you die for their sake, Castiel?" Uriel asks.

"Yes," Castiel answers. "Their destruction is not right." He is digging his own grave, he knows it, but he cannot stand down and go quietly.

Uriel is silent, and Castiel watches him, waiting for the signs of power being gathered, tensing in preparation for desperate combat.

"Will you stand with Lucifer, then?" Uriel asks, and Castiel knows that here is his last chance.

"If it means the survival of humanity," Castiel says softly, "then yes."

Uriel studies him, then nods slowly. "Then witness their dreams tonight, and continue to hide them. Use this to hide yourself," Uriel tosses an amulet at him, and Castiel catches it automatically. "And go."

Castiel holds the amulet in his fingers and knows it for what it is: he appears human with this, something barely of consequence to any angel.

Uriel vanishes before his eyes.

Castiel puts the amulet on his neck, feeling something within him unclench.

"Traitor," Castiel whispers, and knows it to be true for both him and Uriel.

Sam dreams, and in the corner of his dreams, Castiel waits.

Castiel waits with sword in hand and hopes that he doesn't need to use it.

He hears the sound of feathers, and then there are arms closing around his waist, and all he can think is that a cupid has found him.

But no: it is Uriel's voice that rumbles a greeting, and those are Uriel's fingers on his chest.

"Uriel," Castiel says, confused.

"Lucifer wants to speak to you," Uriel murmurs, holding on, and Castiel can feel his breath on his neck.

"What are you doing?"

"Something that has been denied to me for a long time," Uriel murmurs, and Castiel doesn't understand.

He says so.

"I know you don't remember," Uriel murmurs. "I know that they stole your memories and rank from you. I know what Raphael did."

"What...?"

"He'll explain everything in due time," Lucifer says, and Castiel jolts, stiffening in Uriel's hold automatically.

Lucifer is there, standing barely feet from him. Castiel's first instinct is to flee, but he can do nothing when Uriel is confining him.

Castiel is not good at reading emotions on faces, but he thinks he sees sadness in Lucifer's eyes.

"They have made you suffer, haven't you?" Lucifer says softly. "And you don't remember why."

"Remember what?" Castiel asks, feeling like he's missing context for the entire conversation.

Lucifer shakes his head. "You've chosen the right path, Castiel," he says. "I would tell you more, but if Uriel let you go, you would flee before me."

"I don't understand," Castiel says, even as he pushes back against Uriel.

"Raphael's work. He has tried to destroy all who would follow me, or worse."

Uriel growls low behind him and Castiel feels fear curl in him, and he can't say who he's afraid of more.

"Trust Uriel," Lucifer says, and then he is gone.

Instantly Castiel can feel himself relaxing, coming back down to a normal state of mind, and he does not understand what happened.

"The Healer can twist minds," Uriel murmurs. "Create reactions where there should be none, and more. In the Beginning, when you stood with Lucifer in opposition of Raphael, after Michael was twisted beyond repair in his hands, when Lucifer was forced to Fall - "

Castiel shudders, feeling something in his mind begin to tear, and break free. He *knows* Uriel is telling the truth.

" - Raphael took those of us who were most loyal and decided not to imprison us," Uriel continues. "But instead to use us, to show the rest of Heaven what would happen if they defied him."

"I - "

"You were sealed, your access to your Grace strangled so that you are barely strong enough for the duties of the lowest among us, and your memories hidden so that you would know of no other existence."

"Uriel - "

"I was made to hate the very beings I defended," Uriel whispers. "I was forbidden contact with you."

Castiel knows it is true, can feel it in his borrowed bones, but -

"What happens now?" Castiel asks with a shaking voice.

"We follow Lucifer, and take back what was denied us," Uriel says, and Castiel wants to look at him. "We hide the Winchesters until Lucifer can gain their help, and we rage against Heaven with all of our might."

Castiel closes his mouth before he can say yes.

Uriel lets go of him and steps back, and Castiel turns around, unsure of what to say now. Unsure of what to say to this.

"I will defend you, and you will defend the Winchesters," Uriel says. "I will see you soon, but in the waking world. I promise you that."

Then he is gone, leaving Castiel alone in Sam's mind, leaving him to absorb everything that he has been told.

Sam wakes up to the sounds of Dean brushing his teeth and to the presence of Castiel by the window.

"Cas?" Sam says, and stops as he remembers some of his dream. "Was that real?"

Castiel doesn't turn around, and Sam struggles out of bed so he can approach him.

"It was real," Castiel says, but before Sam can ask about anything else, he is gone with the sound of wings.